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A
SERMON
PREACHED AT THE
PARISH CHURCH OF COPFORD,
IN ESSEX,
IN BEHALF OF
The French Clergy,
REFUGEES IN THIS KINGDOM;
AND PUBLISHED FOR THEIR BENEFIT,
By C. HAYWARD, B. A.
MINISTER OF THE PARISH.

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PARISH CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE

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W. C. HAYWARD

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THE following discourse was preached in the parish church of *COPFORD*, in behalf of the FRENCH CLERGY, Refugees in this kingdom.—A very liberal contribution has been already raised for the use of these unfortunate men, by well-informed and benevolent persons; and much more would have been collected, if prejudice, and misinformation had not operated against them.

The following pages were not unsuccessful in promoting this benevolent purpose amongst those who *heard*, and they are published with the sincere intention of obtaining the same end in those who may *read* them.—The author is not without hopes of success;—in the first place because he has received some degree of encouragement from a Prelate high in the dignity of the Church, and high in estimation as a writer;—and in the second place, because if any profits should arise, he cheerfully dedicates them to the Fund for the Support of the Charity he wishes to recommend.

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S E R M O N.

Matthew, chap. xxv. verse 35.

*For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat;
I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was
a stranger, and ye took me in.*

THESE words are selected from that very interesting chapter of the Evangelist, in which our Lord, after having instructed his disciples in two obvious, and beautiful parables, proceeds to give a grand and solemn description of the Day of Judgment.

In the examination of the different actions that will finally appear before that august tribunal, our Lord, in this place, chiefly confines himself to the exercise of *benevolence* for his sake—that is on the principle

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of *religion*.—In a religious light, therefore, a charitable and a merciful disposition is made one great test of a good christian, and is distinguished with so much estimation and honour, that he who has relieved the wants of *the least* of the most unimportant, and undistinguished of his followers, is considered by his Saviour in the same meritorious light as if he had done it unto him.—Of so much importance is humanity considered, and with so much dignity and encouragement is it inculcated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.—We may, therefore, reasonably conclude, that men, who for the sake of religion, and in return for the unbounded love of their Lord, are slow in conferring acts of kindness on their needy and distressed fellow-creatures, either do not understand the real nature of christianity, or possess no sincere veneration and love for the great Author of it.

But a charitable disposition, is at once a disposition so *pleasing* as well as excellent, that the very feelings of our nature, unless they are strangely perverted indeed, will in a very

very high degree cherish and promote it.—As long as there is any pain to be removed, any necessity to be supplied;—as long as there are “hungry to be fed, naked to be clothed, sick to be visited, and strangers to be taken in,” so long will the voice of nature teach us to exult at every favour we can confer, at every pain we can alleviate.—The pleasure which attends such actions, is its own abundant reward, even in this world; and every man, who from a disinterested and benevolent heart bestows his charity on a needy brother, does at the same a favour to himself.

When we seriously consider in what the chief business of this present life consists, we shall find that a very material branch of it is to remove all those natural and accidental evils, which our situation and ability enable us to remove. I am commanded to preserve my own life, and it is equally my duty, to do all in my power, to preserve the lives of other men—If I have more than I can eat, God forbid! that I should suffer my brother to starve!—If I am surrounded by the conveniences,

veniences, and comforts of life, if I have a house to shelter me, and raiment to cover me; if I have enough and to spare, shall I behold a fellow-creature exposed to cold and nakedness, and want, and not hasten to relieve him? Where is my christianity, which ought to set before me the example of my Saviour; and where is the sober sense, that ought to remind me of the instability of all human blessings? The assistance which another stands in need of from me, I may one day want for myself; and with what assurance can I hereafter hope for that benevolence which I am now too selfish to impart to others.

From a sense of self-gratification, and of sound policy, therefore, as well as from a regard for religion, we ought always to be ready to *do good, and to communicate*;—and if this representation is a true one, we may reasonably conclude, that an uncharitable, can neither be a pious, an happy, or a wise man.

Of this indeed the world in general seem to be very sensible. A charitable man is a character

character so universally esteemed and beloved, that many of those who neither feel or practise this excellent virtue, whose love of accumulation is superior to the love of every thing else, who are governed by a motive directly opposite to *giving away*; even these often endeavour to appear kind and compassionate, so far as such appearances can be preserved without the loss of any pecuniary consideration.

It is no uncommon practice with such men to be very liberal in contributing their *advice*, whenever they are solicited to contribute any thing more *effectual*.—Though they neither feel, nor relieve the wants of the poor, and the distressed, they have too much regard for the opinion of the world, to treat them with contempt, or to repulse them with severity. Even the beggar that casually implores the smallest pittance of charity, is *gently* admonished on the impropriety of seeking a provision by idleness, which might more properly be procured by industrious employment; though disease may have strongly painted in the emaciated countenance

countenance of the wretched object, a perfect inability, by any laborious exertion, to remove his wants, or to alleviate his distress.

But if imprudence should have united with misfortune to hasten the ruin of him who petitions for relief, the *charity of words* has a still wider field for the exercise and display of its vain and fruitless compassion. The petitioner is answered with moral reflections on his past conduct; cautioned with great earnestness in regard to his future, and dismissed with the *pious* hope, that so much severe experience will teach him wisdom for the time to come.

There can be no doubt, that the man who gives the best advice he is able to a fellow-creature in distress, and who strongly points out the fatal consequences of an imprudent and vicious course, chuses a most suitable opportunity for performing a most friendly office. But to give *only* advice to one that is perishing with want, agonized with pain, and sinking under despondency, if we have it in our *power* to do more, is at the best to
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do no harm, without doing any good—is one degree better than if asked for bread, *we should give a stone, or for a fish to give a serpent.*

Charitable advice united with charitable assistance, is truly beneficial; it then *doubles* the obligations we confer—but to give the advice which is *not* asked, and to refuse the assistance which *is*, will often be found useless, and sometimes impertinent.

But the duty, the nature, and the pleasure of benevolence, have often been explained, proved, and recommended. It is evidently commanded in the word of God, in the gospel of Jesus Christ—It strongly prevails, in the breast of every good man, and is a duty which as long as the present state of things continue, can never be neglected, without entailing *misery* on one half of the world, and *remorse* on the other.

On the present occasion, I would willingly persuade myself, that I shall not find any of *you*, so little attached to this most delightful
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tenet of your Religion, as not to promote a deed of kindness and mercy : I am to solicit your contributions for a body of men who, without the assistance of a generous people, have escaped from the unjust vengeance of a cruel persecution in their own country, only to perish with want and poverty among strangers.

The first motive which I shall offer to excite your bounty in behalf of the French Clergy, who have sought an asylum in this kingdom, is this—that they are *strangers*. I am aware that this circumstance instead of operating in their favour, has been deemed in the minds of some men an objection to relieving them at all—but it can be considered in such a light only by those, who are not truly sensible of the nature and extent of Christian charity. The words of the text are sufficient to convince every man who acknowledges the authority of the Author, that their being *strangers*, is a very forcible and unanswerable argument why we should contribute to their relief—for *I was a STRANGER (says our Lord.) and ye took me in.*

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To be *naked*, to be *hungry*, to be exposed to all the mortifying evils of *poverty*, is so deplorable a situation that, unconnected with the moral reasons which may have tended to produce it, can have only one aggravation, and that is, to suffer it in a foreign country. To be compelled to beg a shelter amongst a people, connected with the sufferers by no nearer tie than that which unites the whole world together—upon whose assistance they have no legal claim whatever ;—and among whom, from their peculiar situation, they can contribute in a very partial, if in any degree, by their own industry to procure even bread to eat—who probably are, for the greater part, unacquainted with the language we speak ; and who without the timely assistance of our humanity must perish, in the midst of every convenience and luxury, as certainly as though they had been shipwrecked on the most barren as well as the most inhospitable shore.

I am sorry that in a case of so much pressing necessity, where *real* objections should hardly be considered *as such*, that imaginary

obstacles have been raised, and in many instances too successfully, to defeat the pious and benevolent designs, of those who are the friends, and the promoters of this contribution.

In lamenting the present situation of these injured servants of God, I have been answered, that no pity is due to *ill-designing* men—That in their hearts they certainly are the enemies of this country; and that they only wait for a proper opportunity to throw off the mask, which their present necessity has obliged them to assume. Suffer me to assure, and I *hope*, to *convince* you, that such unfeeling aspersions, are the unhappy, tho' the too common consequences of ignorance, or misrepresentation.—Alas! was it the *voluntary* choice of these Refugees to come amongst us, or has their conduct since they have been here, betrayed any symptoms of such base and unheard-of ingratitude? On the contrary—If to endanger their lives, by opposing such destructive measures as precipitated the overthrow of their *Country*, and their *Religion*;—if to lament with every
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mark of sincere and pointed abhorrence, the barbarous, and unprecedented outrages which so disgracefully stigmatize the kingdom of France—if to express the most ardent wishes for the speedy termination of such disastrous events—if to receive with humble thankfulness, and to acknowledge with public gratitude, the assistance that has already been given—if these circumstances denote a conduct very different from the behaviour of *dangerous* and *suspicious* men, then the present objects of our consideration, ought not to be beheld in so obnoxious a point of view.

Even if we were uncharitable enough to suppose, that, to a man, they *were* our secret enemies, we may at least dismiss the superfluous idea that any danger will arise from their enmity. We have had too great and recent proofs, of the almost universal attachment of our Countrymen to their *King*, and *Constitution*, to fear any thing from the dissemination of disloyal principles—and as for any hostile attack, their number is infinitely too small, and their habits of life, too contrary to the hard and rugged discipline
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of war, to permit such a supposition to escape the imputation of absurd improbability.

There is yet another argument against the liberal contribution of your bounty, which I am sorry to have heard from men by no means backward on *most* occasions to be the promoters of every thing that is kind and compassionate.

I am aware, that in pleading causes of this nature, it is not always either necessary or expedient, to drag forward into view, the imaginary, and groundless objections of misinformed or prejudiced persons.—But where such obstacles have been started, and such prejudices have been adopted, as prove a *real detriment* to a benevolent design, it then becomes necessary to expose and overthrow them.—We are not often inclined to favour the *whole*, where we disapprove a *part*—nor in general are we to expect that mankind will second our endeavours in procuring the success of any object we aim at securing, unless we can first convince their judgment, and remove their prejudices.

But

But to return to the argument—It has been said, that whilst we have so *many Poor* of our own who require relief, and assistance, it is *unnecessary*, and even *unjust*, to lavish that relief and assistance on *Foreigners*—Alas? There are too many of these *Foreigners* who would be thankful, for the certain, the *legal* supply of their necessities which the *poorest* subject of this country may claim from his parochial establishment. If a Fellow Subject and a *Foreigner* in the *same* destitute condition should apply to us for relief, and if it was in our *power* to assist only *one* of them, I readily grant that in the scale of moral obligation our bounty will descend upon the *first*—The one has a claim upon us as a *man*; the other, in many respects, as a *brother*—But in the present instance, this is by no means the case.

By the wise and benevolent principles of our law, no man can be so persecuted by misfortune, as to starve for want of bread to eat;—even the vicious, and the undeserving are not left to perish without assistance—Particular

ticular instances of cruelty or inattention in the treatment of the Poor, we may sometimes indeed discover; for where shall we find a good law never violated, or a beneficial power never abused:—but in general we may venture to assert, that the numerous family of poverty and distress so plentifully disseminated over every country, are no where so kindly treated, or so amply provided for, as they are with us. We cannot consider it as a hardship that those who are supported by such important assistance are required, as long as they continue able, to perform that moderate and reasonable portion of labour, without which as the Apostle has observed *no man should eat*;—and what a consolation ought it to be to the *Poor* of this kingdom to consider, that when their strength is destroyed by sickness, or worn out by old age, they can never be denied a shelter from the inclemency of the weather, wholesome provision to support their lives, and medical assistance to remove the disorders they suffer, or to alleviate as much as possible the painful maladies that bring them to their graves.

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These great and comfortable privileges every poor man in this country *may* enjoy, and surely then we cannot call it unjust to relieve those who are reduced from an affluent, or at least a *decent* provision, to a more destitute situation than the lowest of our own fellow-subjects—We cannot think we are injuring our own Poor who can *claim* so much, if we assist with a temporary supply men who have no privileges at all, but the privileges of distress, and who would never have implored the compassion of another country, if they had not outlived the prosperity, and been driven from the protection of their own.

Had these persecuted men voluntarily forsaken the duties of their calling, and from caprice resigned the subsistence arising from their employment;—had they been banished their country, as the opposers of it's real interests;—had they been traitors to their King, or enemies to a *good* constitution we should not have stood forward in their behalf, nor would the highest authority in this kingdom recommend them to your protection.

tection.—But these are men who for conscience sake, have suffered the shipwreck of their fortunes—Who deserted not their country, till their country had deserted them—first plundered them of their property, and then required a sacrifice, which neither their conscience nor their wisdom permitted them to make; to go, was indeed poverty and distress—to stay, was imprisonment and death.

It will further influence every pious man in their favour, when he considers, that the immediate objects of his bounty are the Ministers of God.

Though distinguished from us, as Protestants, by many and important differences in faith, and ceremony, they still agree with us in doctrines most essential to salvation—they worship the same God; depend on the mercy of the same Saviour, and supplicate the aid of the same Holy-Spirit—Though we do not partake of the fellowship of the same Church, we yet agree in the same hopes, and await the issue of the same judgment.

A difference

A difference in religious opinion, should not at any time, or in any situation, prompt us to injure or insult our fellow-creatures, much less should it prejudice the exercise of our humanity.—To Beings endued with the same nature as ourselves, we should naturally give all the assistance in our power.—To Christians we are bound to do it, as unto the Household of Faith.—As the Ministers and Stewards of the Gospel, our obligation to relieve them becomes still stronger.—He who sincerely loves the Master, will contribute as much as possible to the welfare of those who are his servants.

When Jesus Christ and his Apostles first preached the Gospel to the world, the minds of the greater part, both of the Jews, and the Gentiles, were prejudiced against it;—and when we consider how directly this pure and holy Religion opposed the ambitious hopes of the first, the false philosophy of the last, and the licentious practices of both, we shall in some measure account for, though we cannot justify their opposition. But in

the present advanced period of the world, when Christianity has long been received as the *True Light* that came down from Heaven;—when the spiritual labourer, in the Vineyard of the Gospel, has long been considered as worthy of his hire;—and, when the conscious discharge of the sacred office has acquired so much and so deserved respect, let it not be said, that the Pastors of the Gospel, the Embassadors of Jesus Christ, however denominated or distinguished, were so cruelly persecuted in one nation, and neglected by another, as not even to have a place where to hide their heads.

— The comforts, and the miseries of every different situation in life, are proportioned to the former circumstances of those who enter upon them;—he who has *always* been poor and needy, will not so sensibly feel any severer degrees of poverty and want, as one who is plunged from a superior situation, to struggle with difficulties he never expected to encounter, and to submit to mortifications he has never been accustomed to bear.

But

But the last is in a very melancholy sense, the case of the French Refugee Clergy— They must feel, on every account, the evils of their present situation, in a much severer manner than less distinguished, or less-informed men could do.— Their hearts are sensibly wounded by the disgrace of their Religion, as well as their own distressed condition.— There are, perhaps, few of them, who have not to lament the loss of the most valuable and esteemed connections.— They have all to weep the untimely death of their King, and the universal anarchy and confusion of their country.— Their habits of life are wholly altered—the discharge of their duty wrested out of their hands. In leaving their native land, they left behind them all the solace of local connection, all the satisfaction of study, all the power of doing good.— These are sources of grief beyond our reach to close up—but let us do all in our power to make that situation *tolerable*, which we must despair of making happy.

It is not the opprobrious character of this nation to suffer the injured and the oppressed

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to plead in vain.—Whilst our arms are succouring a good cause *abroad*, let us not neglect a compassionate cause at *home*.—Let us not forget that the same dreadful lot might have fallen upon us, and we might have been reduced to supplicate that bounty, which by the good Providence of God, we are so happy as to have it in our power to bestow.

We are placed in so advantageous a situation, that even in the time of war, we enjoy many of the comforts, and much of the security of peace. We are not harrassed by the hourly dread of a plundering enemy; stunned with the thunder of the battle, or pierced with the groans of the wounded.—And in proportion as we are exempted from such scenes of horror and destruction, we are more at leisure, and, I hope, more inclined to mitigate the misfortunes of other men.

Finally—At the Day of Judgment, the barriers which divide nation from nation shall be thrown down.—We shall then be
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all assembled together as one great family—there will be no distinction but between the good and the evil ; and no pre-eminence but the pre-eminence of virtue.

At that Great Day we shall meet with those in a very different situation, who are *now* the objects of our compassion ;—and if we believe that every thought, every word, and every action will be brought into judgment, and that true undissembled christian charity will cover a multitude of sins, we shall *rejoice* to meet them ; being well assured, that our benevolence will be had in remembrance before God.

And if in that last and solemn assembly of all mankind, it should be permitted for one fellow-creature to acknowledge his obligation to the goodness of another, will not these Servants of God come forth at our examination, and declare—*These are the merciful men, who, when we were hungry, fed us ; when we were thirsty, gave us drink ; when we were naked, clothed us ; and, when*
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we were strangers, took us in.—We are already acquainted with the blessed answer of our Judge—For as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.

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